

In the Specification:

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 4, line 26 of the application, as follows:

– The aging operations may include periodically inserting an aging instruction into an instruction pipeline within the IIPC 300. As illustrated by the global and database aging request circuit 350 of FIG. 2B, a global aging register 352 (e.g., 32-bit countdown counter) may be used to specify the number of cycles of a system clock SYCLK that are to occur before each aging operation request is inserted into the instruction pipeline. Each aging operation that is inserted may operate to age one entry within a database that is programmed to support aging. Each database within the CAM core 330 may have an individually specified time period for aging, which means the frequency of the age service requests for the plurality of databases (shown as DB0-DB15) may be independently controlled. These time periods may be specified by a plurality of 24-bit countdown counters 356 that are set to database specific time constants (i.e., count values) and clocked at 1/256th the system clock frequency. This slower clocking rate may be achieved with a ~~[[divide-by-8]]~~ divide-by-256 circuit 354 that is responsive to the system clock SYCLK. As long as a database is enabled for aging, a database age service request is issued every time the corresponding 24-bit countdown counter 356 decrements to zero and is reinitialized. The IIPC 300 determines which database is to be serviced during each aging operation using a round-robin arbitration of all pending database age service requests. One entry within a selected database is aged in response to a selected age service request. The aging of a selected entry proceeds as follows. If a corresponding age enable bit for the entry is set to 0 within the age enable array 322, then the aging operation does nothing because the entry is not subject to aging. If the age enable bit is set to 1 within the age enable array 322 and a corresponding age activity bit is set to 1 (i.e., the entry is active) within the age activity array 324, then the aging operation clears (i.e., resets) the age activity bit to 0. Finally, if the age enable bit is set to 1 within the age enable array 322 and the corresponding age activity bit is set to 0 (i.e., the entry is inactive), then the aging operation removes the entry

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from the selected database by marking the entry as invalid (e.g., sets the valid bit associated with the entry in the CAM core **330** to an invalid state). The activity bit associated with an entry can be set to 1 whenever the entry is originally written into the CAM core **330** or a search operation results in a hit for the corresponding entry. A learn instruction and a set valid instruction may also operate to set an activity bit associated with a corresponding entry. --